

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8990

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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CONFIDENTIAL BRUSSELS 6097

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: BE, XF, IS, PFOR

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH PIERRE HARMEL

1. ON OCTOBER 24, PRESIDENT HARMEL GAVE ME HIS VIEWS ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND ON EUROPEAN UNITY. MR. HARMEL, SEVERAL TIMES BELGIUM'S FOREIGN MINISTER, REMAINS AN ACTIVE FORCE ON THE EUROPEAN SCENE AS CHAIRMAN OF THE BELGIAN SENATE'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE AND AS AN INFLUENTIAL ADVISER TO MINISTER VAN ELSLANDE.

2. MR. HARMEL ARGUED THAT THE KEY TO A SOLUTION TO THE ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE WAS TO FIND A NATIONALITY FOR THE PALESTINIAN ARABS. KING HUSSEIN'S PROPOSAL FOR A PALESTINIAN ARAB HOMELAND ON THE WEST BANK OF THE JORDAN RIVER WAS PROBABLY THE BEST SOLUTION. HARMEL ADDED THAT THE STATUS OF JERUSALEM WAS ANOTHER PROBLEM, BUT UNTIL THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES COULD TAKE A UNITED STAND, THERE WAS LITTLE HOPE THAT THE MOSLEMS AND THE JEWS COULD AGREE ON A STATUS FOR THE HOLY CITY.

3. IN ANY SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST, IT WILL BE NECESSARY

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FOR BOTH THE US AND THE USSR TO BE QTE BRUTAL UNQTE IN EN-

FORCING A SETTLEMENT. IF EITHER ONE OR THE OTHER WAS NOT PREPARED TO BE SO, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER TO ALLOW THE FIGHTING TO CONTINUE SO THAT AT LEAST A CONCLUSIVE MILITARY SOLUTION COULD BE REACHED.

4. IN ANY MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT, MR. HARMEL FELT, EUROPE COULD PLAY A MAJOR ROLE THROUGH ECONOMIC SUPPORT OF A NEW HOMELAND FOR THE PALESTINIANS. NEITHER THE US NOR THE USSR HAD ANY LONG STANDING CONNECTION WITH THE LEVANT, MEDITERRANEAN, MR. HARMEL NOTED, WHEREAS ITALY AND FRANCE DID. HENCE, THE EEC HAS POTENTIALLY A GREAT ROLE TO PLAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST OF TODAY.

5. PERHAPS TAKING PART IN A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT WOULD MOVE THE EEC FORWARD ON THE ROAD TO UNITY. THE SPIRIT OF PARIS NOW SEEMS TO HAVE DISSOLVED (EVEN THOUGH THE COPENHAGEN DECLARATION WAS A POSITIVE EFFORT) AND NATIONAL ISSUES HAVE AGAIN COME TO DOMINATE EUROPE IN POLITICS.

6. TURNING TO EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS, MR. HARMEL SAID HE FELT IT NECESSARY FOR EUROPE TO HAVE A SINGLE SPOKESMAN ON EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND HE HOPED THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF FOREIGN MINISTERS COULD TAKE UP THAT ROLE. THE PRESIDENCY. HE FEELS SHOULD BE HELD FOR A FULL YEAR BY A STATESMAN OF STATURE WHO DOES NOT HOLD A NATIONAL OFFICE.

COMMENT: IN THE PAST, MR. HARMEL HAS FREQUENTLY SPOKEN TO ME OF THE IMPORTANCE OF EUROPE MAKING A GREATER SHARE OF ITS WEALTH AVAILABLE TO THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. HIS REMARKS ON ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO A HOMELAND FOR THE PALESTINIAN ARABS FITS INTO HIS PREVIOUS TALK WITH ME ON THE NEED FOR EUROPE TO TAKE UP A GREATER BURDEN IN ALL OF THE DEVELOPING WORLD. IT CONFORMS AS WELL TO HIS PROPOSAL AS FOREIGN MINISTER FOR INVOLVEMENT OF THE EC IN A PROGRAM OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REHABILITATION OF THE POPULATIONS MOST AFFECTED BY THE MIDDLE EAST WAR.

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